

Get Involved

For the first time, we are embarking on a study of the entire Florida Keys in an attempt to gauge the effects of future development on our island chain. We want you to be a part of the process. Please attend the next series of public meetings in your area or invite us to speak at your regularly scheduled organization meeting by calling 305-296-5596.

The FKCCS is managed by Ann Lazar, Florida Department of Community Affairs; Debbie Peterson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Ricardo Calvo, Ph.D., technical contractor URS Corporation.



Ann Lazar
Florida Department of Community Affairs
850-410-1564

Debbie Peterson
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
904-232-2204

For the most recent information on the FKCCS and to provide public input, visit:
www.saj.usace.army.mil/projects/proj4.htm

Post Office Box 1077
Key West, FL 33041-1077

The Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study

Vol. II

Carrying Capacity Analysis



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN S. MALTZ

*The purpose of the Florida Keys
Carrying Capacity Study is to
determine the ability of the Florida
Keys ecosystem to withstand all
impacts of additional land
development activities.*

(The Florida Administrative Weekly, April 12, 1996)

History

In 1996 the governor and cabinet called for the preparation of a "carrying capacity analysis" of the Florida Keys in response to the hearing officer's report on the *Monroe County Comprehensive Plan*. In a cooperative effort, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Department of Community Affairs, and Monroe County are conducting the Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study to look at the impact of additional land development activities on the Florida Keys.

Carrying Capacity Analysis Model

The primary result of the study will be a determination of the ability of the Florida Keys ecosystem to withstand all impacts of additional land development activities. This will be achieved by the development and use of a Carrying Capacity Analysis Model to analyze a range of potential growth scenarios. The Study will not result in a single number, but will identify a range of development options lying within the carrying capacity framework of the Florida Keys.

The Carrying Capacity Analysis Model is a complex computer model that will use environmental thresholds and tolerance limits to analyze the impacts of additional land development activities on the ecosystem, including water quality, threatened and endangered species, and habitat. In addition, the carrying capacity study will consider the impacts of more development on hurricane evacuation and social preference. While not all aspects of the study can be simulated in a computer model, they will nevertheless be analyzed in a variety of other ways, such as surveys and spe-

cial reports, and the information produced factored into the final results.

In addition to answering the question, "How much additional development can the Keys withstand?" after the study is complete the Carrying Capacity Analysis Model will be made available to local governments so that additional scenarios can be tested. This will assist communities in selecting which future is right for them, while ensuring the range of available choices are within the limits of the Keys' carrying capacity. Once local governments have chosen, the scenario will be implemented through amendments to the comprehensive plans and land development regulations.

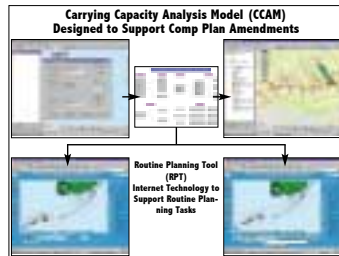


Routine Planning Tool

The study will also result in a Routine Planning Tool (RPT), if time and funds allow, that will be designed for everyday use by state and local planners. The RPT will use the same data as the complex CCAM, but will be an assessment tool for routine planning decisions rather than long-term growth management adjustments such as comprehensive plan amendments.

How They Work

The CCAM and RPT will analyze future development scenarios as a way to assess the Florida Keys' ability to handle additional land development activities. The scenarios, which include land development, redevelopment, land acquisition, and restoration, have been developed by local planners and will be available for public input before incorporation in the final model.



Once a scenario is selected to run through the model for analysis, its impact will be measured in several categories ranging from species viability to the regional economy. When possible, the results will be displayed visually through computer mapping. The model will highlight each category that exceeds its carrying capacity threshold. For example, the model would flag an unacceptable increase in demand for available freshwater. Other information such as regional economic impact will be displayed in tables or figures. This assessment will provide the necessary information for state and local decision makers to make better-informed planning decisions based on the critical measure of carrying capacity.

